integral part of society, citizens of the republic with full rights. He said that "Azerbaijan's multi-ethnicity, its different languages, and use of Russian in many spheres have played an important role in the development and making of the culture of the people of Azerbaijan."

Geydar Aliyev familiarized the Russian parliamentarians with the current situation in the conflict zone between Armenia and Azerbaijan. He said that Azerbaijan was making efforts toward a peaceful settlement of the conflict, but that the republic's interests have to be taken into account. Russia, in whom Azerbaijan holds great hopes, has not yet adopted a position in principle on this issue, he believes.

The leader of Azerbaijan believes that some progress in the peacekeeping process could be made if Russian President Boris Yeltsin were to visit the region. He said that this was proposed to the Russian leader and that Azerbaijan are ready to provide for his security during his stay here.

### Parliament Considers Russian Settlement Plan

*NC2304112094 Baku TURAN in English 0910 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku (April 22) TURAN—Today the Milli Majlis of Azerbaijan began discussions concerning the settlement plan of Russia of the Azeri-Armenian conflict.

Rasul Guliyev, Speaker of the Azeri Parliament noted that this plan was proposed in the Moscow CIS leaders Summit on April 14-15.

He also noted that he is due to leave for Moscow on April 25, during which time the meeting with Armenian representatives will discuss the abovementioned document.

Gasan Gasanov, the Foreign Minister of Azerbaijan made a speech giving a summary of the settlement proposal. He noted that should Azerbaijan sign this document according to the version proposed by Moscow, Nagorno-Karabakh legally may leave Azerbaijan.

Gasanov also noted that "acceptance of the plan will give legitimacy to the ethnic cleansing of Karabakh and at the same time the cleansing of all local residents from the regions occupied by Armenians. The main fact is that the document does not provide for the return of Azerbaijanis to Karabakh. And it means that Azerbaijan will lose control of its vast territory" said Gasanov.

After the Azeri Foreign Minister's speech, most deputies of the Azeri Parliament called the plan "a cynical humiliation of the national dignity of Azerbaijan. This plan means that Azerbaijan will be one of humiliation before final capitulation."

The session of Milli Majlis will continue after the break.

### Turkish Foreign Minister Cetin on Baku Visit

#### Meets With Aliyev

*NC2404192294 Baku Radio Baku Network in Azeri 1700 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] President Geydar Aliyev received Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin and his delegation today. After welcoming the visiting delegation, President Aliyev briefed the Turkish diplomats on the social and political developments in Azerbaijan. Referring to the fighting in Azerbaijan, Aliyev said that while Armenia's aggression against the republic has intensified, Azerbaijan's people hoped that the countries around the world, particularly Turkey, would take resolute steps to end the aggression. However, Aliyev said: Regrettably, regarding the UN resolutions and the CSCE effort, a satisfactory outcome is impossible. This is because Armenia's aggression, which has continued for six years, [words indistinct]. An effective solution cannot be [words indistinct].

Foreign Minister Cetin said that Turkey cannot be reconciled with a country that occupies Azerbaijan's territory. He also noted that Turkey will always support Azerbaijan's efforts to defend its territory.

Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov, First Deputy Prime Minister Fuad Sharipov, State Advisers [name indistinct] and Vefa Gulizade, and Altan Karamanoglu, Turkey's ambassador to Azerbaijan, attended the meeting.

#### Cetin, Hasanov Hold Talks

*LD2404134494 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1236 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Sevindzh Abdullayev and Viktor Shulman]

[Text] Baku, 24 Apr—Ways to implement the Azerbaijani-Turkish accords reached during Heydar Aliyev's official visit to Ankara were discussed this afternoon at talks held in the Azerbaijani Foreign Ministry between Hasan Hasanov and Hikmet Cetin, the foreign ministers of Azerbaijan and Turkey. The Turkish foreign minister arrived in Baku at around midday on a short working visit.

Also examined at the talks were questions linked to the current situation in the area of the Armenian-Azerbaijani conflict and ways to settle the conflict within the framework of the CSCE Minsk group. According to the information available, the sides held political consultations on questions concerning Azerbaijan's forthcoming entry into the NATO 'Partnership for Peace' program and the republic's relations with non-aligned states, as well as a number of problems of mutual interest.

#### Cetin Expresses Support for Azerbaijan

*TA2404144794 Ankara ANATOLIA in English 1420 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku, April 24 (A.A)—Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin said today that Turkey will continue supporting the just cause of Azerbaijan.

Cetin, who arrived in the Azeri capital for a one-day working visit, visited his Azerbaijani counterpart Hasan Hasanov in his office.

Before the talks between the two delegations, Cetin said that his visit was another indication of the friendship between the two countries.

Cetin said that political and economic relations between Turkey and Azerbaijan were rapidly developing and that the two countries have already signed cooperation agreements on all fields.

Cetin pointed out that the world would not accept seize of land by force and the aggressive policy and invasion of Armenia was against the principles of Conference of Security and Cooperation in Europe.

On his part, Hasanov said that they wanted to further relations with Turkey.

### Cetin Urges Sanctions on Armenia

*LD2404205594 Moscow ITAR-TASS in English 2033 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[By ITAR-TASS correspondents Sevindzh Abdullayeva and Viktor Shulman]

[Text] Baku April 25 TASS—Three-hour talks between Turkish Foreign Minister Hikmet Cetin and Azeri President Geydar Aliyev were completed here late at night on Sunday. The meeting was mostly held behind closed doors.

The talks were focused on the Armenian-Azeri conflict over the disputed Nagorno-Karabakh enclave and ways for its settlement. According to the Azeri leader, efforts by international organizations, including the United Nations, the CSCE and its Minsk group, failed to produce any positive results. Seeking to end the protracted warfare by any means, the republic accepted Russia's mediatory initiatives. However, all attempts to solve the thorny problem have been in vain so far. The only obvious thing is that the Armenian side is forcing Azerbaijan to agree to its terms, which do not meet the republic's national interests, Aliyev emphasised.

The Turkish foreign minister believes that "the world community should at last understand clearly that Azerbaijan is forced to wage war in order to defend its territories." Cetin dismissed the principle of equal responsibility of both conflicting sides for the continued fighting, since "aggression is aimed against Azerbaijan." He pledged that "Turkey would uphold this position at all international forums."

The Turkish foreign minister told a news conference after the talks that "Armenia should meet the demands of U.N. Security Council resolutions, and to withdraw its troops from occupied Azeri lands immediately and unconditionally." In case it continues ignoring these demands, the world community should impose sanctions upon the republic, Cetin stressed. As for Turkey, it will not lift the embargo for supplies of foodstuffs and medicines to Armenia until the republic halts the aggression against Azerbaijan.

According to the Turkish foreign minister, the current deadlock in the peace process can be broken by convening a session of the Minsk conference. However, this is possible only in case of liberation of Azeri territories. Therefore, Russia, the United States and other Minsk group countries should step up their efforts to create conditions for the session to be convened.

Speaking about deployment of peacekeeping troops in the conflict zone, Cetin emphasised that "Turkey strongly believes these can be only international forces, not troops of any definite country."

The Turkish foreign minister assessed his short-term visit to the Azeri capital Baku as "very fruitful." According to his Azeri counterpart Hasan Hasanov, this visit testified to Azerbaijan's stable and consistent relations with Turkey, to which the republic gives top priority in its foreign policy.

### Update on Situation at Front

*NC2304111294 Baku TURAN in English 0910 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku (April 22) TURAN—Last night Armenian troops continued attacking along the entire frontline, reports the press centre of Azerbaijan Defense Ministry.

The Armenian army attacked the southern section of the front (Fizuli-Beylagan) three times. The Azeri army managed to liberate the village of Ashagy-Abdurakhmanly and several strategically important heights. During the fighting three of Armenia's tanks and one military personnel carrier were destroyed and several dozens of Armenian soldiers were killed. The Azeri army captured five machine-guns, one flame-thrower cluster, four grenade discharger cups, and dozens of sub-machine guns.

Fierce fighting in the eastern direction (Agdam-Terter) of the front took place throughout the night where the Armenian army tried to break through the defense of the Azeri army. But attempts by the Armenian army failed since the Azeri army was subject to fire upon the position of Armenian troops in this direction. Approximately 50 Armenian soldiers were killed in this section of the front.

This morning the Armenian army fired upon the village of Tap-Karakayully of the Geranboy region.

At the same times border posts of the Azeri army in the Tauzskiy region were subjected to fire from the Idzhevanskiy region of Armenia.

### Fierce Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh Conflict Zone

*LD2304160994 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1322 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] As before, the situation in the zone of the Karabakh conflict remains tense. The press service of the Nagorno-Karabakh defense army reported to Interfax that over the previous 24 hours active hostilities were being waged on the greater part of the confrontation line. Fierce hostilities do not stop at the south-eastern part of the Karabakh front where the Azerbaijani forces try to break the defense line on the Martunin and Fizuli directions being supported by a great number of armored vehicles and combat aviation.

According to the press service, last night Karabakh positions were attacked at two sections of Karabakh's Martunin region, near the populated center of Kuropatkino and in the region of Agburun. Experiencing great losses (according to preliminary information, as many as 50 soldiers were killed on mine fields), the Azerbaijani army managed to move forward and to seize three Karabakh posts.

However, in two hours, the Karabakh formations started a counterattack and by the morning of April 23 moved the adversary to his starting positions. The Karabakh army lost two people were killed and nine wounded in the course of these hostilities.

Simultaneously the headquarters of the Karabakh defense army refuted information of Azerbaijan's Defense Ministry stating that a great number of fighters had allegedly joined the Azerbaijani army. These reports have been qualified "as pure falsification intended to conceal facts of mass desertion of Azerbaijani soldiers."

The border of the former Nagorno-Karabakh autonomous region has been practically restored after the recent counterattack of the Karabakh forces which liberated six villages in the north of the Mardakert region, the leader of the Karabakh army press center Serzh Arushanian reported to Interfax. In his words, as of today only a small territory of the Mardakert region which includes several villages, including the largest village Leninavan in the north-east of the region is still under control of the Azerbaijani forces.

In addition, Arushanian said that the Shaumian region is still occupied though it has been part of Nagorno-Karabakh Republic since September 1991.

### Karabakh Forces Shoot Down Azeri Bomber

*LD2304172994 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1614 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] The Nagorno-Karabakh Defense Ministry press service told Interfax that the Karabakh air-defense forces had shot down a SU-25 Azerbaijani jet which had tried to bomb Stepanakert (the capital of Nagorno-Karabakh). A total of seven Azerbaijani jets had taken part in the air attack, Stepanakert said.

However, the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry announced that an Azerbaijani jet had suffered a clash on April 23 when carrying out a regular training flight. The pilot baled out and was saved, Baku affirmed.

### Conflicting Reports on Fighting in Nagorno-Karabakh

*LD2404143194 Moscow Radio Rossii Network in Russian 1300 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] According to the Defense Ministry of Azerbaijan, last night Armenian troops launched an offensive on the Terter and Geranboy directions in the north of Nagorno-Karabakh, but suffered heavy losses and failed to achieve any significant success.

Meanwhile, completely opposite reports are coming from Armenian sources. According to a statement by the press service of the staff of the defense army of Nagorno-Karabakh, this morning Azerbaijani troops went on to the offensive in the Fizulinskiy [Fizuli] and Mardakertskiy [Mardakert] Rayons, but all their attacks were repelled and on several sections the Karabakh detachments managed to seize strategic heights.

The Armenian side also reports large losses suffered by the enemy in today's fighting. These were INTERFAX and RIA reports.

### Karabakh Army Reports Successful Counteroffensive

*LD2504122894 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1044 GMT 25 Apr 94*

[Text] During a successful counteroffensive on April 24, Karabakh formations destroyed the Azerbaijani firing points east of the regional center of Mardakert and the village of Talysh in the Mardakert Region, the Karabakh defense army's press service told INTERFAX.

Karabakh formations lost seven soldiers, a tank and an armored vehicle; 19 Karabakh soldiers were wounded. Azerbaijan lost 80 soldiers, three tanks and one armored vehicle. Another Azerbaijani tank was taken as a trophy.

According to the headquarters of the Karabakh army, the Azerbaijani units fighting in the northeast of the Mardakert Region are panic-ridden and the front has practically broken up. POWs say that Azerbaijani police units which acted as an anti-desertion force, were the first to flee.

According to the latest reports, in the morning of April 25 there was no fighting in Karabakh.

Meanwhile, an informed source in the Azerbaijani Defense Ministry told INTERFAX that fierce fighting continued yesterday in the Geranboi, Terter, Agdam, and Fizuli regions of Azerbaijan. All Armenian attacks were rebuffed. The same source says that Armenians suffered large losses.

In the Fizuli Region, Azerbaijani units occupied a number of strategic heights not far from this regional center controlled by Armenians, said the source.

### Aliyev Postpones Trip Due to War Escalation

*NC2304195594 Baku TURAN in English 1723 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku, April 23 (TURAN)—"Azeri President Geydar Aliyev has been forced to postpone his visit to Brussels due to the escalation of Armenian aggression", said the Presidential apparat's press-service. The visit, which was planned on April 26, was put off for a week.

During the visit, Azerbaijan's participation in NATO's programme, "Partnership for the sake of peace", will be discussed.

Last week, during the press-conference, Azeri Foreign Minister Gasan Gasanov told journalists that "the possibility of Azerbaijan's joining the NATO programme is being reviewed by the Azeri Government and Azerbaijan will give its final answer in the near future.

### Baburin Leads Russian State Duma Delegation to Baku

*NC2304203794 Baku TURAN in English 1723 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku, April 23 (TURAN)—A delegation from Russia's State Duma headed by Sergey Baburin has arrived in Baku at the invitation of the head of the Russian Community in Azerbaijan, Vladimir Zabelin. The mission, representing the faction of "Russia's Way" also includes deputies Ivan Anichkin, Anatoliy Grishnyavikov, Sergey Glotov.

This morning the delegation was accepted by Rasul Guliyev, the Speaker of Parliament of Azerbaijan where a wide range of discussions concerning the interparliamentary and intergovernmental questions were discussed.

Following the meeting the delegation was accepted by the Azeri President Aliyev. During the meeting Aliyev discussed future relations of Azerbaijan with Russia, and noted that "both countries are suffering difficult conditions where our joint efforts may help to eliminate the difficulties."

Speaking about the Armenian aggression, Aliyev said that "we had expected Russia to play a just and objective role".

Aliyev noted that the fates of more than one million Azeri refugees, whom many countries are helping. "Why is Russia not assisting the these Azeri refugees?" asked Aliyev.

The Azeri President also talked about the resumption of economic links between the two countries. "Today not only Azerbaijan, Russia, as well, is suffering from the break in economic links with us".

In reply, Sergey Baburin said that "today reviewing the Azeri- Armenian conflict there is a double standard, and I don't understand the position of those who speak about Azerbaijani aggression at the present when considerable territory of Azerbaijan has been seized."

Baburin said that the delegation is scheduled to visit to the front line and meet with refugees and report to the State Duma and commission leaders about the visit upon return.

The fact-finding mission's function is also to look into the situation of the Russian-speaking population in Azerbaijan. "Azerbaijan is the most favoured republic among the CIS countries in respect to this question".

Speaking of the establishment of economic ties, Baburin said, "that when the CIS countries re-establish contact amongst themselves or amongst countries abroad, and when Russia interferes in this process, this is bad for Russia."

### Baburin Charges Armenia 'Aggressor'

*LD2404144794 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1238 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] A Russian parliamentary delegation visiting Armenia was due to visit on Sunday the front line in the republic's current war with Armenia and Azerbaijan's districts along the Armenian border, the Azerbaijani parliamentary press service said.

It said the delegation, headed by Sergey Baburin, leader of the Russian Pan-National Union, planned to make a report on the situation in the war zone to the Russian parliament.

Baburin said in Baku on Saturday that he did not support Russia's official position on the Azerbaijani-Armenian conflict. He said the aggressor was easy to identify, "must be curbed" and leave the occupied lands. "The side which has seized the lands is the aggressor," he said, meaning Armenia, at a meeting with representatives of Azerbaijan's Russian-speaking community, who said both the Azerbaijani government and the country's society at large were friendly towards them. But they accused Moscow of pursuing a pro-Armenian policy, which, they complained, cast a shadow on that friendliness.

Baburin plans to return to Moscow on Monday.

### Alliance of National-Democratic Parties Created

*NC2304204994 Baku TURAN in English 1723 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Baku, April 23 (TURAN)—Yesterday the parties of "Boz Gurd", United Azerbaijan, Young Azerbaijan and the Azerbaijan National-Democratic Party created the alliance of National-Democratic parties.

"The goal of the alliance is to mobilize all forces of the nation to withstand Armenian's aggression, to safeguard territorial integrity and Azeri borders, to protect human rights, principles of democracy, and the traditions and culture of the Azeri nation", according to the mission of the alliance that was read at a press conference.

Representatives of the parties criticized the internal and external policy of the current leadership of the country.

"The staff appointment policy of the Azeri leadership is based on bribery", said the Chairman of "Boz Gurd" party, Bakhtiyar Akhmedov.

According to Iskander Gamidov, "Alliance differs from the Democratic Congress, other blocs and democratic parties. It gives first priority to the national problem."

He mentioned that the alliance is in opposition to the Azeri leadership. He said that the Alliance will protest all acts that run counter to the national interests of Azerbaijan will be submitted to the interests of other countries. [sentence as received]

## Georgia

### Mediator Says Georgia, Abkhazia Moving Apart

*LD2204125394 Moscow ITAR-TASS World Service in Russian 1045 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] During their talks in Geneva, the Georgian and Abkhaz delegations "adopted mutually exclusive positions, backing farther away from the commitments they signed in the political declaration of 4 April." Feliks

Kovalev, the roving ambassador who is heading the Russian delegation, said this in an interview with an ITAR-TASS correspondent. Summing up the results of the Geneva round, he disclosed that, on behalf of the United Nations and the Russian Federation, "options for a compromise were proposed, and the parties expressed readiness, in essence, to adopt them as a basis for further discussions." "The next session will be held in Moscow on 10 May, and we may be able to make a little more progress there than we have managed on this occasion."

Two documents proposed by the mediators will be discussed at the meeting in the Russian capital. The first deals with "political and legal elements of a comprehensive settlement of the Georgian-Abkhaz conflict." The second concerns "proposals on the establishment of a coordinating commission." The documents were jointly prepared by UN and Russian diplomats. Kovalev said that the Russian delegation "made a substantial contribution."

Is there any chance the two sides will reach an agreement? "It is very difficult to answer this question," F. Kovalev noted. "Judging by their drafts, they have not budged from their original positions. In fact, they are going backward rather than forward." The main problem is connected with Abkhazia's political status. "One side wants to regard itself as an independent state entering into a treaty relationship with another state. That is the Abkhazian starting point. The starting point of the Georgians is to keep everything roughly as it was before the conflict started," the diplomat said.

The United Nations and Russia are proposing a "union state." Their proposals also say that the parties recognize the territorial integrity of the entity they might establish as a result of the talks, Kovalev concluded.

### Shevardnadze Envoy Hopeful Over Abkhaz Talks

*LD2304134494 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1210 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] The final meeting in the Abkhazian-Georgian peace talks was held in Geneva yesterday. Despite maximum efforts made by Georgia, participants in this round of talks failed to reach a compromise over the definition of a political status for Abkhazia. The next round of talks will be held in Moscow on 10 May. Russia will probably be able to influence Abkhazia at home. It has apparently had a chance of this before, too, but evidently waited for an appropriate moment and circumstances.

A compromise formula suggested by Russia and the United Nations will be discussed during the Moscow round of talks. This formula, which was proposed back in Geneva but not discussed, says that Abkhazia will be a subject which will be granted sovereign rights within a union state. There was not sufficient time for this formula to be discussed during the Geneva round of talks. However, sovereign rights and a union state sound a little suspicious. At least, this does not sound very encouraging for Georgia. It seems that the Georgian side is forced to recede from its positions both on the battlefield and at the negotiating table.

According to an official version, two documents will comprise the basis of the Moscow discussions. These will be the UN and Russian suggestions on the political and legislative basics of an all-embracing settlement and the establishment of a coordinating commission with the participation of the negotiating parties as well as UN and Russian diplomats. The coordinating commission is expected to be assigned to handle practical issues pertaining to supply, transport, and communications.

To cut a long story short, yet another round of negotiations is still to come and there is still something to pin hopes on.

Aleksandre Kavsadze, the Georgian head of state's personal envoy, is in hopeful mood, believing that there is a chance to come to an agreement about the deployment of peacekeeping forces in the conflict zone. He has added that Georgia insists on the deployment of these forces across the whole territory of the conflict in order to secure the safe return of Georgian refugees to their homes.

### UN Delay in Sending Troops to Abkhazia Criticized

*LD2304211194 Moscow Russian Television Network in Russian 1920 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[From the "Vesti" newscast]

[Text] Another round of Georgian-Abkhaz talks held last week in Geneva still did not produce any tangible results. Although the fact that the talks are being held at all is in itself a positive development. The Georgian side's position on the return of refugees to Galskiy Rayon remains unchanged: Their safety has to be ensured. As for Abkhazia's political status, the United Nations has produced a document on setting up a coordinating council, which is to operate until the conflict is completely settled.

It has also become known that Jaba Ioseliani, head of the Georgian delegation, has expressed resentment with the stand taken by the United Nations, which decided not to send its peacekeeping contingent to the area until this August. According to Ioseliani, it is quite possible that Georgia will accept the proposal put forward by the Russian Federation, which offered to send its forces to Abkhaz territory as soon as possible.

But in the view of Aleksandr Kavsadze, the head of state's personal envoy for the settlement of the conflict, all prerequisites exist even now for the UN Security Council to make a decision to deploy international peacekeeping forces on the entire territory of Abkhazia.

### Abkhazian Deputy Kakubava Abducted

*LD2304142194 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1315 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Tbilisi, 23 Apr—At nine o'clock yesterday Boris Kakubava, a deputy in the Georgian parliament and chairman of the Abkhazian Liberation Union, was abducted after he had taken part in an Alioni program on Georgian television.

Threatening to execute him, the kidnappers demanded that Boris Kakubava cancel the congress of the displaced Abkhazian population scheduled to he held in Tbilisi 23-25 April. The organizers of the terrorist act seem to be afraid that the congress could make the Georgian leaders' political course on the Abkhazian issue look negative. A probable tragic end has been prevented by the prompt intervention of the Abkhazian Liberation Union.

This, as well as other events (delegates of the congress have been denied transport by rayon authorities; transport routes have been closed), demonstrates a desire of the authorities to prevent the congress.

The Abkhazian Liberation Union places the entire responsibility for the incident and its consequences on the leadership of the Republic of Georgia.

This statement was made public by the press service of the Abkhazian Liberation Union at a news conference in Tbilisi on 23 April.

### Crackdown on Terrorism, Corruption Announced

*LD2204190194 Moscow INTERFAX in English 1737 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] At a meeting between the parliamentary leadership and law-enforcement officials in Tbilisi Friday, Georgian leader Eduard Shevardnadze announced the beginning of a crackdown on terrorism and corruption. "Neither I nor the security service will rest until we catch the murderer of Deputy Interior Minister Giya Gulua," he was quoted as saying.

Shevardnadze called corruption "the biggest danger facing the country." He added that "it will devour all Georgia, and dreams of democracy will remain a fairy tale."

Shevardnadze instructed the Interior Ministry, security service, prosecutor's and judicial bodies and the whole government to develop a draft decree on tighter corruption controls, including specific tasks, within ten days.

### Shevardnadze, Local Administration Heads Meet

*LD2404143794 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 1300 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] The Georgian head of state held a meeting with the heads of local administrations of Georgia yesterday. The meeting was opened by Teimuraz Pipia, head of the directorate of regional management, who considered problems of all rayons in one context.

Zurab Gegechkori [chairman of the state committee on land resources] spoke about the process of privatization. He said there were numerous problems in the issue of distributing land and moot problems pertaining to land issues that existed in relations between rayons had to be settled. He also pointed out there were instances of unlawful seizure of lands.

Next to take floor was Georgian Education Minister Tamaz Kvachantiradze, who spoke about problems pertaining to the system of education in rayons. He said salaries of school teachers had been considerably increased. Teachers working full time will earn 900,000 coupons [per month]. It was added that a promotion like this granted to teachers would not solve all problems existing in the system of education. The minister requested assistance from the heads of rayon administrations.

Other problems of rayons were also given consideration at the meeting.

In conclusion, Eduard Shevardnadze, Georgian head of state, made a speech. He made an appraisal of the meeting and set appropriate tasks and instructions for the heads of rayon administrations.

### Russia Cancels Duties on Georgian Goods

*LD2304095094 Tbilisi Radio Tbilisi Network in Georgian 0800 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] According to SAKINPORM, Georgia's customs department has received a letter from the Customs Committee of the Russian Federation signed by Kruglyakov, first deputy chairman of the committee. The letter says: Because the Republic of Georgia has been a member of the CIS since 1 March 1994, in accordance with the edict issued by the Russian Federation Customs Committee, the heads of its regional departments and customs houses have been officially instructed not to levy a tax in the form of VAT, special duties, and excise duties on goods produced in Georgia and carried from the Georgian territory retroactive to 1 March 1994. Money already paid for the above-mentioned taxes should be refunded from the customs house account or it can be applied to future payments.

### Terrorist Organization Claims Killings

*LD2304153594 Tbilisi IBERIA in Georgian 1315 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Batumi 23 [April]—A terrorist organization naming itself Jigaro spread leaflets in Batumi. They are stating that they are a political-terrorist organization.

According to the leaflets, Jigaro claims several terrorist acts including the killing of the police chief in Khelvachauri Rayon and explains this by a struggle against injustice.

Jigaro also warns top officials of the Adzharia Autonomous Republic that unless they stop violating human rights and carrying out ruinous policy in the autonomous republic, they will be physically eliminated.

## Estonia

### Ukrainian, Estonian Presidents Discuss Weapons

*LD2204174494 Tallinn Radio Tallinn Network in Estonian 1600 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Excerpt] Ukrainian President Leonid Kravchuk takes an understanding attitude to the Estonian request that Ukraine might supply Estonia with military equipment and weapons within the framework of its conventional weapon reduction. According to the Estonian president's press service, Leonid Kravchuk spoke to Estonian President Lennart Meri on the telephone. According to the Estonian Defense Forces Command, Ukraine is considering whether it can spare Estonia any weapons left over within the weapons reduction program. Estonian military men are holding similar talks with their U.S. counterparts. [passage omitted]

### Defense Minister Concludes Visit to Ukraine

*WS2204200694 Tallinn BNS in English 1906 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Excerpt] Tallinn, Apr 22, BNS—Estonian Defense Minister Indrek Kannik ended today his official visit to Ukraine. During the visit Kannik and his Ukrainian counterpart, Gen. Vitaliy Radetskyy, signed an agreement on cooperation between the two countries' defense ministries. Kannik invited Radetskyy for a visit to Estonia.

Kannik told BNS today Ukraine's independence means also Estonia's independence. He said the relations between the two countries are steadily improving.

"Estonian-Ukrainian relations are reaching the stage of concrete cooperation," Kannik said. "The questions of possible weapons purchases will be solved on the expert level. We are very much interested in the agreement on conventional arms reduction Ukraine has signed," the defense minister told BNS.

"The Estonian-Russian and Ukrainian-Russian relations have reached very delicate dimensions, so we need one another all the more," the minister claimed.

The agreement Kannik and Radetskyy signed on April 20 is a framework agreement that maps out different opportunities for cooperation in the defense sphere, including consultations on the formation and financing of defense forces and joint action within NATO's Partnership for Peace program.

Other issues discussed at the meeting of the defense ministers included international peacekeeping operations, the state of Estonian-Russian and Ukrainian-Russian relations, division of the former Soviet Black Sea Fleet, and tensions around the Crimean peninsula.

The Ukrainian defense minister told BNS Russian troops must leave Estonia by the proposed withdrawal deadline of Aug. 31, 1994. "Russian military bases on your territory are your domestic affair and the decision whether to retain them is up to you," he noted. Radetskyy did not support granting Russian military retirees a special status in Estonia. [passage omitted]

### Prime Minister Confers With UN Secretary General

*WS2204163394 Tallinn BNS in English 1005 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Tallinn, Apr 22, BNS—Estonian Prime Minister Mart Laar, who is on an official visit to the United States, met yesterday with the U.N. Secretary General Butros Butros-Ghali.

Butros-Ghali was pleased with Estonia's participation in the formation of the Baltic peacekeeping battalion. He promised his assistance to Estonia, if needed, in issues related to the withdrawal of Russian troops from the country. Butros-Ghali said the United Nations attaches great importance to forging ties with new member states.

Laar informed the U.N. secretary general about the recent International Labor Organization anniversary conference in Tallinn and Estonians' participation in peacekeeping missions in the Nordic countries' peacekeeping units.

The Estonian premier also gave a survey of Estonia's recent history, the reforms in society and the problems related to the continued presence of Russian troops in the country, such as increase in troop-related crime, enormous damage to the environment, and the danger posed by the Paldiski nuclear reactors.

Laar touched briefly on the general need to take into account and protect the interests of small countries, especially with a view to their security.

The U.N. secretary general affirmed that the organization represents the interests of all its member states. He underscored the importance of the participation of an Estonian delegation in the upcoming U.N. conferences and summit meetings.

Laar continued his visit to the United States in Boston. He talked at Harvard University about Estonian economy.

The Estonian premier is accompanied by Foreign Ministry Chancellor Indrek Tarand, his private secretary Toomas Kiho and adviser to the government Ardo Hansson.

Laar returns to Estonia on April 25.

### Legislative Foreign Affairs Commissions Meet

*WS2204163194 Tallinn ETA in English 0819 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[From 22 April EESTI SENUMID, PAEVALEHT, p 1; "News Bulletin" No. 77/94]

[Text] Friday, April 22—Representatives of parliamentary foreign affairs commissions of eleven countries met in Tallinn yesterday to discuss their role in the shaping of foreign policy.

The commission chairmen meeting held a news conference yesterday, describing the issued discussed and the results of the meeting. Chairman of the Riigikogu [parliament] foreign affairs commission and initiator of the meeting Vello Saatpalu described the topics as the making of foreign policy by the different arms of power, the technology of foreign policy and the role of traditions and laws.

Estonia has an excellent opportunity to take over the best experience of existing systems, he stressed.

Riigikogu Vice-chairman Tunne Kelam pointed out that representatives of various political systems were represented, enabling to learn about different foreign political traditions.

Saatpalu criticised some examples of Estonia's recent past when vital decisions had been made without involving all the relevant institutions and cited the example of Russia where the positions of the president, the foreign minister and the defence minister can widely differ. He hoped that such meetings will become regular.

Foreign Minister Juri Luik and Tunne Kelam met Chairman of the Swedish parliamentary foreign affairs commission Daniel Tarschys, who was recently elected new Secretary General of the Council of Europe [CE]. They discussed the future of the CE and the Estonian-Russian relations. Tarschys stressed that Russia will have to meet the CE requirements before joining the organisation, including the one allowing member states to keep their troops in other countries only with the consent of these countries.

## Friendship, Cooperation Pact With Hungary Ratified

*WS2504100294 Tallinn BNS in English 1238 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Tallinn, Apr 23, BNS—Ambassadors Jaak Joeruut of Estonia and Bela Javorszky of Hungary exchanged Friday [22 April] in Helsinki letters of ratification of the Estonian-Hungarian friendship and cooperation agreement, the Foreign Ministry press service told BNS.

The two countries declare in the pact that their relations are based on international legal norms and the principles of sovereignty and territorial integrity, equal rights, non-interference in one another's internal affairs, good-neighborliness, mutual trust, and advantageous cooperation.

The parties keep in mind that the security of Estonia and Hungary is inseparably linked with the security of all states participating in the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe process.

Both states are prepared to engage in effective cooperation in international organizations and they attach great importance to developing collaboration between their legislative and executive bodies, the local government level included. The foreign ministers of the two countries must meet at least once a year to discuss, among other issues, the implementation of the effective pact.

The parties to the agreement pledge to coordinate their efforts in mutually advantageous economic cooperation and to promote business contacts and direct links. The agreement provides for all- round cooperation in transport, easing of passenger and goods transport regulations and passport and customs checking procedures, and development of tourism.

Close cooperation is foreseen in improving data processing and communications systems, in science, technology and environment protection, and all spheres of culture. Under the agreement, Estonia and Hungary will take steps to protect ethnic minorities. They also state their readiness for concerted action against organized crime, terrorism and drug traffic.

## Dismantling of Paldiski Reactors Slows Down

*WS2204174694 Tallinn BNS in English 1312 GMT 22 April 94*

[Text] Tallinn, Apr 22, BNS—Estonia is ready to go ahead with the dismantling of the nuclear reactors in Paldiski, Juri Tikk, the special government representative in Paldiski, told BNS.

Tikk thought the dismantling of the reactors and removal of nuclear fuel from Estonia might start early in May. He said the Russian side has run into some difficulties with the technical side of the operation, which prevents it from setting things in motion. The Russian customs officials at Kingissepp have detained a container without which the dismantling cannot begin, Tikk claimed.

The government representative said that a Russian landing ship stands ready in Paldiski's South Port to receive the parts of the dismantled reactors.

Russia wants to conclude a joint agreement on the removal of fuel and on the dismantling of the reactors. Estonia stands firm that both operations must be regulated by separate treaties. "We still don't know how (Russia plans) to handle the dismantling of the reactors and their removal from Paldiski," Tikk said. But, he said, the removal of nuclear fuel has been finalized down to the last detail.

BNS has information nuclear fuel will be removed from Paldiski by rail. Tikk declined to conform or deny the report. "Whichever kind of transport is used, safety will be guaranteed in any case," he stated.

Tikk claimed the most hazardous stage of the operation is opening of the reactor lid. "Yet, even if radioactive vapor should escape, it won't pose a very great danger since the cloud will disperse soon," he maintained.

Jan Christer Lindhe, a researcher from the Swedish National Radioactivity Protection Institute, also voiced the opinion that the reactors don't constitute a big threat to the environment. "It's more of a political problem," he claimed.

"Should an accident occur, we shan't keep it secret," Tikk declared. Estonia monitors continuously the radiation level around the reactors and if something occurs there that the Russian side would like to hush up, Estonia will spread the news through all mass media channels.

The Estonian Government decided on April 12 to enforce a special regime on the Pakri peninsula where Paldiski is situated to ensure the safety of the dismantling operation and the population.

### New Patriotic Organization 'Parem Eesti' Formed

*WS2204111494 Tallinn ETA in English 0655 GMT 21 Apr 94*

[From 21 April EESTI SENUMID, P.EVALEHT, HOMMIKULEHT, pp 1, 3, 4; "News Bulletin" No. 76/94]

[Text] The 10 right-wing parties and organisations that met in Tallinn on Tuesday [19 April] formed a new organisation "Parem Eesti" (Better Estonia), a news conference was told yesterday ("Parem" can mean both "better" or "rightwing" in Estonian and a founding member Hellar Grabbi claimed the ambiguity to be deliberate).

The activists of the new organisation stressed that they did not invite the ruling coalition members, since their policy has been disappointing. Another fringe party, the Future Estonia Party, refused to participate because of ideological difference. Negotiations with some other organisations are in progress, but the results have not been disclosed yet. One of the initiators, Juri Estam, stressed that the organisation will not cooperate with right-wing extremists, referring to the Patriotic Central Union.

The initiators denied having formed the organisation for improving their chances at the elections; the aim was to actually restore the Estonian nation state, the organisation statement read. A political party or an electoral union may be formed, but there is no firm decision on that issue as yet.

The "Better Estonia" intends to use decolonisation and desovietisation in order to achieve its aims. Green Party chairman Juri Liim stressed that they intend to employ "civilised decolonisation" by appealing to the Russian Government to recall its colonists. A thorough investigation of the activities of the Communist Party and the KGB and the GRU [Soviet Army Intelligence] in Estonia was also mentioned as an important part of the programme. Further items include rapid return of land and property to the legal owners and support to private ownership.

The organisation denounced the draft law of the Tallinn City Council recommending that all persons registered as permanent residents of Tallinn as of 1 July 1990 be granted permanent residence permits. The council is exceeding its authority, the "Better Estonia" declared.

## Latvia

### U.S. Envoy Presents Gore Letter to Prime Minister

*WS2204200394 Tallinn BNS in English 1906 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Riga, Apr 22, BNS—Latvian Prime Minister Valdis Birkavs received U.S. Ambassador Ints Silins who handed over a letter from his country's Vice President Al Gore, the Government Information Agency (VIA) told BNS on Friday [22 April].

Silins reiterated the unambiguous support of the U.S. Administration for the March 15 initialed agreements on Russian troop withdrawal. The signing of the documents would allow international organizations to involve in the control of their implementation, Silins said.

Silins reconfirmed the United States' commitment to allot 2 million dollars to dismantle the new building of the Russian- operated radar facility at Skrunda as soon as the withdrawal package is signed.

VIA failed to inform BNS about the content of Al Gore's letter but presumably it contains the same idea as Silins said.

### Russian Negotiator Says Pact Must Be Signed

*WS2504092594 Tallinn BNS in English 1549 GMT 23 Apr 94*

[Text] Riga, Apr 23, BNS—If Latvia refuses to sign the whole package of initialed troop withdrawal documents, including the section on social guarantees of military retirees, Russia may halt the pullout indefinitely, said chief Russian negotiator Sergey Zotov.

"I can officially say that the question in that case will be about immediate suspension of Russian troop withdrawal from Latvia and cancellation of decision on Aug. 31 as withdrawal deadline," Zotov told a Latvian newspaper Friday [22 April].

"The end of August is not far away and if the signing of all four agreements is longer delayed we will start to suspect Latvia of an intention to evade the signature," Zotov told the nationwide DIENA newspaper.

The Russian delegation head asked Latvians not to overdramatize the situation, though. He and his delegation plan to tour Riga next week to meet with Latvian negotiators. No concrete date for the meeting has been fixed yet.

The trip will be aimed at preparing the visit of Latvian President Guntis Ulmanis in Moscow during which he will meet with his Latvian counterpart Boris Yeltsin, said Zotov.

Zotov claimed that the day of the presidential summit was unknown yet but Latvian media reported earlier this week that the presidents would meet on April 30.

Latvian experts spent in Moscow three days this week and met with Russian colleagues in a bid to soften the agreement on social guarantees for military pensioners, sources told DIENA.

A source said that Latvia can hope for little and not serious changes in the agreement on Russian war pensioners, which grant them broad social guarantees, like easy access to residency permits.

As reported, Russia expected Ulmanis to sign the package April 21 but the Latvian parliament failed to adopt a decision authorizing him to do so.

### GATT Membership Conditions Discussed

*WS2204153494 Riga LETA in English 1152 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Riga, 22 April (LETA)—Thursday [21 April] in the Latvian Foreign Ministry a news conference was held by

the leader of a GATT working group, Finn Teilgard, who visits Riga to discuss the conditions of Latvia entering this organization with the Latvian Administration. In the course of his visit he met the Latvian prime minister, Valdis Birkavs, the Saeima's [parliament] chairman, Anatolijs Gorbunovs, and some Latvian ministers and experts.

Mr. Teilgard said that he told the Latvian Government about the six basic principles of this organization which is mainly purposed for the promotion of international cooperation and the development of trade among its 124 member country. The first condition providing the participation in GATT is that Latvia has to work out the memorandum on the state political and economic situations plus the documents reflecting the current external trade procedure in the country and send them to the GATT headquarters.

The leadership of GATT shows its understanding of the present economic situation in Latvia, and will take it into account when the issue of Latvia's participation in GATT is under discussion, Mr. Teilgard said.

### Prime Minister Talks With EU Team

*WS2204153594 Riga LETA in English 1152 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Riga, 22 April (LETA)—The focal point of the meeting of the Latvian Government's head, Valdis Birkavs, with the delegation of the European Union [EU] was what issues Latvia wishes to discuss at the conference in Paris scheduled for late May and dedicated to the European stability pact.

The governmental information agency reports that Valdis Birkavs confirmed his willingness to take an active part in the European stability pact. Speaking on the issues Latvia would like to consider during the coming conference in Paris, the prime minister said Latvia is interested to involve into the discussion with other countries of the issues of national identity preserving, national minorities' integration into a society and teaching a state language.

Latvia would wish to view the possibility of launching the ombudsman institution. The issue of the repatriation of Russian military retirees is of the same importance and needs consideration in the context of the stability pact. All these matters Latvia would like to discuss at the multilateral talks.

Mentioning the issue of the borders with Russia, Birkavs expressed doubt whether it is comprehensive to discuss the issue at the coming conference and stressed the fact that Latvia is forming its stand basing upon the peace pact of 1920 between the two states.

### Government To Abolish Salaspils Reactor

*LD2204190694 Riga Radio Riga Network in Latvian 1700 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Excerpt] Today at the Environment and Regional Development Ministry, Minister Indulis Emsis, officials of the Salaspils atomic reactor, scientists, and nuclear safety experts agreed in principle on abolishing the Salaspils scientific research atomic reactor. [passage omitted]

### Changes to Law on Foreigners Adopted

*WS2504100594 Riga DIENA in Latvian 15 Apr 94 p 1*

[Article by Karlis Erglis: "Government Changes Law on Foreign Citizens"]

[Text] Riga, 14 Apr—During its session today, the government adopted changes to the law "On foreign citizens and stateless persons visiting and staying in the Latvian Republic," as well as supplements to the law "On police" concerning the creation of an immigration police, within the framework of the state police. As was explained by Inese Birzniece, chairman of the Parliamentary Commission for Human Rights, the amendments which have been adopted in accordance with Article 81 of the Constitution, refer to people who have entered Latvia illegally, and they have been adopted with the purpose of establishing procedures for removing these people from the state.

The changes in the law, which are said to fully correspond with the CSCE mission in Latvia, are not yet accepted in their full form, therefore it was impossible to learn today the precise procedure for deportations and possible appeals. However, as we were told by I. Birzniece, "it is out of the question that some mass deportations could take place." It is stated in the amendments that they do not apply to people whose legal status in Latvia is not clear, and regarding whom the legislative process has not yet been completed. I. Birzniece emphasized that the draft law on the status of noncitizens should be accepted as soon as possible.

According to the changes, the border guards and state police will have the sole right to deport the above mentioned people, whereas these individuals shall have the right to appeal the decision to the director of the Immigration Department or in a court of law, I. Birzniece explained to DIENA.

According to a report by Edvins Inkens, the minister for special assignments, at a press conference, 400 people were deported from Latvia last year. There was not a single appeal submitted in any of the cases, which proves that the deportations were correct and well based.

## Lithuania

### President Sends Condolences on Nixon Death

*LD2404122394 Vilnius Radio Vilnius Network in Lithuanian 1100 GMT 24 Apr 94*

[Text] Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas sent a telegram to Washington expressing his condolences after the death of former U.S. President Richard Nixon, ELTA reported.

The telegram stresses that Richard Nixon was one of the first world-ranking politicians to visit independent Lithuania, promoting in every possible way the reinforcement of human rights and democracy in the restored state.

### President Speaks at International Conference

*WS2204181794 Tallinn BNS in English 1546 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Vilnius, Apr 22, BNS—More than 53 percent of Lithuania's people work in the private sector, but the contribution of private enterprises to economic growth and efficiency is still hardly felt, Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas said in his speech at an international conference in Bucharest Friday [22 April].

The four-day Crans-Montana conference, devoted to all-European and regional problems, is attended by representatives of 86 countries and 19 international organizations.

In his speech, Brazauskas said the Lithuanian gross domestic product constantly decreases: by 3 percent in 1990, by 13 percent in 1991, by 38 percent in 1992 and by around 35 percent in 1993. He said a major problem is that the part of the GDP consumed inside the country is growing: 75 percent in 1991, 80 percent in 1992 and around 85 percent in 1993.

The president said attempts to liven up the investment process in Lithuania have been unsuccessful so far. Brazauskas noted that profit taxes were reduced three times in order to stimulate investments from internal sources. In his words, the part of profit or income used for investments may be completely exempted from taxes for 2 or 3 years. Brazauskas also noted that Lithuania intends to adopt a new law on foreign investments.

Discussing the initial stage of state property privatization, the Lithuanian leader said it will have to extended until the end of this year, even though it was supposed to be completed by July. Brazauskas said the process of privatization should be controlled more strictly. But "assertions by some political forces in Lithuania that privatization is hindered, state property is plundered and so on, are unfounded."

The president said "the mass of economically poorly educated shareholders" that formed in the process of privatization for investment checks "does not have any major influence on improving the management of enterprises."

Brazauskas said the standards of living began to improve, although slowly, after inflation and the rise in prices were slowed down last year.

### Legal Assistance Pact Concluded With Kazakhstan

*WS2204181894 Tallinn BNS in English 1546 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Vilnius, Apr 22, BNS—Lithuanian and Kazakh officials on Thursday [21 April] completed talks on legal assistance and legal relations in civil, family and criminal cases. The final round of talks was held in Kazakhstan's capital Almaty.

Lithuanian Deputy Minister of Justice Ginataras Svedas and his Kazakh counterpart Sergey Tikhonov initialed a bilateral agreement on mutual legal assistance.

### NATO Commander on Aid to Baltics

*LD2204204494 Vilnius Radio Vilnius in English 1900 GMT 22 Apr 94*

[Text] Commander in chief of the joint NATO force in northern Europe, General Garry Johnson, currently on a visit in Lithuania, said NATO is ready to increase its aid to the armed forces of the Baltic states. The aid will include both material assistance and consultations provided by specialists in various fields.

On Friday the NATO official was received by chairman of the Lithuanian parliament, Ceslovas Jursenas. The guest said that NATO member states are aware of and understand the concern of the Baltic states over their national security. This concern became ever more grounded owing to the unstable political situation in Russia.

In his turn, Ceslovas Jursenas said that Lithuania would feel more safe when Russia withdraws its troops from Latvia and Estonia. He appealed for NATO's support so that a pullout of Russian troops and the demilitarization of the Kaliningrad reagion would be accomplished sooner.

### Lithuanian President on Treaty, Russia

*WS2104114594 Warsaw RZECZPOSPOLITA in Polish 21 Apr 94 pp 1, 18*

[Interview with Lithuanian President Algirdas Brazauskas by Maja Narbutt; place and date not given: "The Treaty Will Be Assessed by Future Generations"]

[Text] [Narbutt] The Polish-Lithuanian treaty will soon finally be signed; it has already been initialed. Why did the negotiations take so long? They started almost immediately after Lithuania regained independence in 1991.

[Brazauskas] Everyone both in Poland and in Lithuania knows the historical contacts between our states and nations. For ages everything has happened between us—both good and bad things. Therefore, the discussion was difficult and protracted.

The treaty negotiations were held in special circumstances. There is a certain category of people who think—I would say—that they love their homeland more than others. These people react in a very special way to anything that occurs in interstate relations. Not only with Poland, even though this problem really causes the greatest emotions. I also mean the relations with Russia.

[Narbutt] However, was it really not possible to complete the work on the treaty earlier? Was it not possible to abandon the demand of condemning "the Polish occupation of the Vilnius area" earlier? Everyone expected the new Lithuanian authorities to be more pragmatic than the nationalistic Sajudis; everyone expected that the negotiations would be accelerated.

[Brazauskas] When the Lithuanian Democratic Labor Party came to power after last year's presidential elections, relat point. [incomplete word, sentence as published]. Both parties had to take certain steps to find a solution that would be acceptable. This is when I realized that one

cannot look into the past and that Poland did not want that. Let us look into the future, let us think about the future.

If everyone in Europe thought about the past—and in the past terrible things happened, such as World War I, World War II, the revolution, and civil wars—it would not be possible to live a normal life.

[Narbutt] You said much earlier that as far as Polish-Lithuanian relations are concerned, one should look into the future. You said this after the parliamentary elections, which your party won, in the fall of 1992.

[Brazauskas] A treaty is not agreed upon overnight, or within a month. When I became president, lying on my desk was a Lithuanian draft of the treaty which differed a lot from the one that will actually be signed. There were fundamental differences. Step by step we were removing the controversies that existed between Poland and Lithuania.

The treaty that President Walesa and I will sign will be assessed by historians, and future generations as well. They will evaluate the importance of the treaty, its significance for both our states and for Europe.

[Narbutt] The treaty with Poland was a subject of an internal political game in Lithuania. The government found itself under strong pressure from the rightist opposition, which demanded that the treaty include formulations which Poland could not accept. Do you not fear difficulties that may arise when it comes to the ratification in the Lithuanian parliament, as well as a wave of protests against the treaty, in which the past was referred to in one general statement about both countries' sorrow because of the use of force.

[Brazauskas] There are certain people, certain organizations that do not like the treaty. We have already started to explain to them why the treaty must be signed. There was no other solution—we had to regulate the relations with Poland.

If need be, we will explain this over and over again, until this gets across to them.

I do not think there will be any serious problems related to the treaty, any major protests. I would also like to stress that the treaty guarantees the interests of all the citizens of our states, irrespective of their nationality.

[Narbutt] Some of the Lithuanian politicians say out loud that "those who oppose the treaty with Poland push Lithuania into the arms of Russia." What do you think of such a statement?

[Brazauskas] Yes, I do agree with it in a way. In general, all disputes, all the misunderstandings between Poland and Lithuania clearly serve someone. Now, Lithuania wants to go, and is going, in the direction of the West, toward the European structures: NATO, European Union, Council of Europe.

I want to reiterate this: establishing relations with Poland is of great importance to us.

[Narbutt] The initialing of the Polish-Lithuanian treaty has been received with satisfaction in the declaration that ended the recent summit meeting of the presidents of the Baltic Republics in Palanga. It was also stated there that the treaty should be the first step to shorten the distance between the Baltic states and the Visegrad Group.

[Brazauskas] The four states of the Visegrad Group have developed more than we have. This results from the most recent history. The states united in the Warsaw Pact had more possibilities at their disposal than those states that were incorporated in the USSR. We want to be similar to you. Not only Lithuania, but also all the other Baltic Republics are interested in cooperation with the Visegrad Group—both political and economic cooperation.

[Narbutt] It seems that since the last elections the situation in Russia has been heading in a dangerous direction. What is your attitude toward the Russian foreign policy, toward the statements by Foreign Affairs Minister Andrey Kozyrev on the Baltic states and toward the theory of "close foreign states," as well as the "special interests" of Russia in the Baltic states?

[Brazauskas] What right does Russia have to make any claims to other states? Russia is a member of almost all the international organizations. It wants to be admitted to the Council of Europe. The Council of Europe demands high democratic standards. Such a test must be passed. We have already passed it—we have been admitted.

Such statements are unacceptable, absolutely inadmissible in today's world. And they cannot be put into effect as well. If they cannot be implemented, why say such things? In order to frighten someone? Who needs this?

Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia have never volunteered to join the USSR. They were invaded. This is how it should be understood; any claims, speaking about zones of interest are out of place. Russia has taken such a strange approach not only toward the Baltic states, but also toward other countries.

[Narbutt] The concentration of Russian troops in the Kaliningrad Oblast must be cause for European concern, Lech Walesa stated during his recent visit to Latvia. This brought about an angry reaction from the Russian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Soon afterward General Grachev, Russian minister of defense, stated that the Kalinigrad Oblast is "a special defense zone" of Russia. Does Lithuania have similar concerns as Poland does?

[Brazauskas] The Kaliningrad Oblast should be demilitarized. I agree with President Walesa. The concentration of troops always causes misgivings—I discussed this at the forum of the UN General Assembly.

The special location of the Kalinigrad Oblast should be used economically, not militarily.

Maintaining its military outpost by Russia in the west is not understandable, all the more so because Russia wants to join the "Partnership for Peace."

[Narbutt] As the second post-communist state, after Albania, Lithuania officially applied for NATO membership. As it is known, none of the states of our region have a chance to be admitted to NATO very soon.

[Brazauskas] We are not so naive as to believe that once we submit our motion, we will be admitted right away. We like the idea of the "Partnership for Peace" as an intermediate stage on the road to NATO. If the "Partnership" is joined by various states, it will not be indispensable for us to join NATO immediately. The dangers, which might exist in the international relations are automatically smaller. The "Partnership" will create a new security system.

I am definitely in favor of Russia's signing the "Partnership." Then it would be possible to look differently at many issues that we have mentioned.

[Narbutt] Before the presidential elections, you told RZECZPOSPOLITA that the president should be a man who restores agreement, reconciles those who are at odds. You have not managed to do that, have you? In the speech that summed up the previous year you said many bitter words about the opposition.

[Brazauskas] Representatives of the opposition have only just left my office. They often come to me and we talk. As far as the moods among the Lithuanian opposition are concerned, it must be remembered that they are quite peculiar. These are people who have done an awful lot for Lithuania; they helped Lithuania regain independence. They were supported by masses; they were not only in power, but on a pedestal as well. And then they lost.

However, it is not all that bad. There is social peace—even though we have many difficulties, such as low wages and low living standards. There is no hatred, no open conflicts. The opposition in Lithuania has every possibility of presenting its views. Have you noticed how extraordinarily democratic Lithuania is? The opposition is shown on television probably more frequently than those who are in power.

[Narbutt] Yes, indeed. And it often attacks you. Despite the attacks of the opposition, you are invariably the most popular politician of Lithuania. In all the opinion polls you occupy the first position, then for a long time there is no one.

[Brazauskas] For the time being.

[Narbutt] It is definitely difficult for you to talk about this, but how could you define the reasons for such popularity?

[Brazauskas] Popularity. I am wondering about it myself. Sociologists should answer this question; however, they only conduct polls. Now, why is it that one politician is backed by 52-54 percent of the people, and another is supported by 6 percent? I do not know. I am not concealing my biography—everyone knows it. I was a member of the party. Just like many others. I was elected the first secretary of the party when the movement of national rebirth started in Lithuania. Sajudis supported me. They saw something in me, they believed in me. At the first congress of Sajudis I was received as a kind of a hero.

[Narbutt] Does your political past never disturb you?

[Brazauskas] Membership in the party is a real burden for me. I knew that it would be so as soon as I was elected president.

[Narbutt] However, most Lithuanians do not evaluate you that harshly. I am again coming back to your popularity.

[Brazauskas] I am over 60 and I sometimes look back. A few years ago no one knew me, that is, the people did not know me, except the people that I worked with—those linked to the industry. Then it simply happened. Perhaps I said certain things louder and more boldly than others. Yes, certainly louder and more boldly. I was attacked for not saying right at the beginning that Lithuania should be fully independent. Well, I wanted each step to be fully considered. It had to be fully considered and it was.

[Narbutt] Your greatest success and your greatest failure.

[Brazauskas] Someone might say that my greatest success is that I am the president. I do not agree with that. It is not a success; it is responsibility.

The most recent period in the history of Lithuania began in 1988—it was the beginning of the fight to regain independence. There were various moments. Also a moment when we—I mean, my party—were down at the very bottom.

The greatest success was that when we came to power over a year ago, we managed to continue the reforms—but not at the cost of the man in the street. This is very important. Nothing can happen at the cost of the people; the entire burden of the reforms should not rest on their shoulders. So far we have not spoiled anything; at any rate, the situation is certainly not worse.

What will happen next—we will see. Life does not end with one party. Anything may happen. Maybe new forces will emerge...